

Thursday At Three

By David Graham Phillips

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Soon after Fenimore Dayton became a reporter his city editor sent him to interview James Mountain. That famous financier was then approaching the zenith of his power over Wall street and Lombard street. It had just been announced that he had "absorbed" the Great Eastern and Western railway system—of course by the methods which have made some men and some newspapers habitually speak of him as "the royal bandit." The city editor had two reasons for sending Dayton—first, because he did not like him; second, because any other man on the staff would walk about for an hour and come back with the report that Mountain had refused to receive him, while Dayton would make an honest effort.

Dayton turned in at the Equitable building and went up to the floor occupied by Mountain, Ranger & Blakehill. He nodded to the attendant at the door of Mountain's own set of offices, strolled tranquilly down the aisle between several rows of desks at which sat Mountain's personal clerks and knocked at the glass door on which was printed "Mr. Mountain" in small gilt letters.

"Come!" It was an angry voice—Mountain's at its worst.

Dayton opened the door. Mountain glanced up from the mass of papers before him. His red forehead became a network of wrinkles, and his scant white eyebrows bristled. "And who are you?" he snarled.

"My name is Dayton—Fenimore Dayton," replied the reporter, with a gracefully polite bow. "Mr. Mountain, I believe?"

"It was impossible for Mr. Mountain altogether to resist the impulse to howl in return. Dayton's manner was compelling.

"And what the devil—what can I do for you?"

"I'm a reporter from the—"

"What?" roared Mountain, leaping to his feet in a purple, swollen, veined fury. "How dare you enter here?"

"But—why not?" Dayton looked surprised. "No one tried to stop me."

"Impudence!"

"Pardon me—not impudence," Dayton smiled agreeably. "Impudence is unsuccessful audacity. For example, if you had failed to get the Great Eastern and Western, they'd have said you were impudent to try. As it is, men call it audacity. Now, if I'd failed to get here—perhaps—"

Mountain listened with a grim smile. He saw in young Dayton the signs of a quality he especially admired. He couldn't help softening toward him. "I stand corrected," he said gruffly. "Then he laid his hand on the young man's shoulder and pointed toward the large room. "Do you see those clerks?" he demanded.

"I do," said Dayton.

"There are thirty-seven of them, and that big humbug at the door makes thirty-eight. I employ those thirty-eight men to save me from audacity such as yours. Yet here you are, in my private office! How do you explain it?"

Dayton laughed. His laugh was very contagious. "I don't know, I'm sure," he said. "Perhaps if they were the sort of men who could outwit me they'd be doing my work and I'd be doing theirs."

Mountain's eyes smiled. The longer he looked at Dayton's refined yet resolute face the better he liked it. "Sit down," he said in an ironic tone of mock resignation. "But be quick, and be careful not to irritate me with questions that are—audacious. My digestion is poor, and, therefore, my temper is not what it might be."

That is the first recorded story of Dayton's "colossal check." Now for the last one—the one since which his "check" has been thought of and spoken of, admired and envied as "Napoleonic daring."

He soon rose to be a notable special correspondent. One winter afternoon at a musicale in the studio of his friend, whom he straightaway fell in love. She was Elsie Grant, the only daughter of Mrs. James Wickford Grant. She had spent most of her life abroad, and her mother was even then negotiating for an Italian prince who thought well of Elsie and also of her large dot. And then Dayton had come, and he was never the man to shy at obstacles.

He beguiled her mother into not seeing what was going on. He made love to her daughter in a straightforward way. To Elsie, who then could think only in terms of the Almanach de Gotha, it seemed the way of a Rudolph of Hapsburg issuing from his barren mountain farm in Switzerland to conquer men with his sword and women with his smile and to found an empire. When the Grants went abroad in March he succeeded in getting a roving European commission from his newspaper and went in the same steamer. He put the issue squarely before her the day before they landed. He did not speak of love until she had given him the right not only by encouraging him, but also by making it plain that she passionately wished to hear the words that lay behind his looks and tones. "Don't answer me now," he said. "I don't want you on impulse. You're going down into the country for a week. When you come up to London you will know."

He went on to London and began to cast about for something out of the ordinary to send his paper. In a Times report of a meeting of the Royal society he found the hint he was seeking. The world renowned philosopher and scientist, Lord Frampton (Hubert Foss), had addressed the society on "The Destiny of Democracy."

"I'll interview Foss," said he to

Ivagh, the London correspondent of his paper. "Everybody in America knows his name, and what he'll say along those lines will make a lot of talk over there just now."

"But"—Ivagh was an Englishman, unused to and abhorrent of American ways—"you can't do it, Mr. Dayton. Lord Frampton," with emphasis on the title, "is a very old man, almost ninety. He lives as quietly as possible—sees no one. He wouldn't think of interviewing. He's very old fashioned, dislikes even our newspapers, and he's been a sort of recluse all his life."

"No harm in trying," said Dayton. "I'll just drop him a line."

In the mail two mornings later came the answer. Dayton opened it in the presence of Ivagh. It was a printed slip which read:

Lord Frampton appreciates your courtesy. He regrets that age and infirmity of his health make it impossible for him personally to thank you.

"I thought so," said Ivagh, not concealing his delight at Dayton's discomfiture. "He sends that to everybody who tries to intrude upon him."

Dayton mechanically turned the printed slip over. "What's this?" he said. There was writing in a feeble, cramped hand:

My Dear Sir—I am lunching at the Athenaeum club the day after tomorrow (Thursday) and shall be pleased to see you there afterward—at 3.

FRAMPTON.

Dayton thrust the note into his pocket, concealing his feeling of triumph. "I may cable what he says—if it's worth while. It might make a good feature for them on Sunday." And he went away.

Ivagh looked after him, dazed. "Yet there are some people who say there's no such thing as luck!" he grumbled. "Who'd have thought old Frampton had gone stark mad?"

At the Carlton Dayton found a telegram:

Shall be at Claridge's tomorrow. Be sure to come at 3 precisely.

ELISIE GRANT.

"Whatever shall I do?" he said after he had reread the telegram and Lord Frampton's note to make sure. Both for Thursday; both at the same hour. I can't put either of them off. What shall I do with Foss?"

No; Foss could not be put off. He must be seen at the time he had appointed or the great Sunday feature would be lost. "I must send some one in my place. But who? It must be a newspaper man, a man with the newspaper instinct and training; it must be a man of the best possible address and up in philosophy and sociology and Foss. Where can I get him?"

It seemed absurd to think on such a problem, yet after nearly an hour Dayton jumped up and said, "Why, of course—just the man—better than I could possibly do it myself," and began fumbling in a compartment of the trunk that was full of letters, papers and cards. He soon found what he was searching for—a card bearing the address of Henry Carpenter. A common friend in New York had given it to him, saying: "Look Carpenter up and, if you can, put something in his way. I hear he's badly off."

As Dayton said to himself, Henry Carpenter was probably the best equipped man in the world for an interview with Foss for an American newspaper. He was a Yale man with a Ph. D. from Göttingen, and a writer on economic subjects who had won some fame. But philosophy is not profitable, and Carpenter made his living as a newspaper reporter. He had been one of the cleverest in the profession, then had married and taken to drink and gone to the bottom.

The address on the card was in the far end of Piccadilly. Dayton set out, calling at the Victoria. There were several New York newspaper men in the lounge. He asked them if they had seen Carpenter. "Just left him," said one. "He was bound for the Criterion and began a search of the crowded rooms. He soon saw Carpenter wandering about the bar, noting each face as if he were looking for an acquaintance. His clothes, his very expression, proclaimed poverty and failure, and Dayton, knowing his habits, was particularly impressed by the weakness of his chin. But in spite of the air of "hard luck" Carpenter looked the gentleman, the man of superior intelligence. He greeted Dayton effusively, and as soon as the business was disclosed eagerly offered his services.

"There's only one difficulty—will Lord Frampton receive you when he is expecting me?"

"We'll have to take our chances on that," said Carpenter.

"But I never take chances if I can help it. I've been thinking—he doesn't know me and he doesn't know you. Why shouldn't you send in one of my cards—impersonate me?"

Carpenter's face brightened.

"Yes; that is the best plan," continued Dayton. "With your special knowledge you'll do the interview far better than I could. He'll really profit by the deception."

It was so agreed, and Carpenter went away, Dayton advancing him two sovereigns. When he returned the next afternoon his appearance was in every way satisfactory, and Dayton's last misgivings disappeared. He went with Carpenter to the Athenaeum. "It's a little early, old man, but you can send in your—or, rather, my—card and wait. And don't forget you're both under assumed names. If you are calling yourself Dayton when you're Carpenter, isn't he calling himself Frampton when he's Foss?"

"You may rely on me. I'll do my best," said Carpenter.

He saw Carpenter enter the clubhouse; saw him give his card to the attendant. Not until then did he drive away. His heart was light. Fate had been kind to him. On the stroke of 3 he was in the writing room at Claridge's. Elsie did not keep him waiting.

"Mother has changed her plans," she said, hurrying in. "I thought we'd have a clear hour, but she may be back at any moment."

He was looking at her steadily. "Well?" he asked.

She flushed and cast down her eyes.

Then she lifted them and returned his gaze steadily. "Yes," she said.

He gave a long sigh.

"They were silent for a few minutes. 'Mother'—she began.

"She will not consent?"

"It's of no use to ask her. You know that."

He nodded cheerfully. "But we don't need her consent. You're of age."

"What do you suggest?"

"Well, I had arranged—in case you accepted and your mother wouldn't have it—that we should marry at the American consul general's. He's an old friend of mine and has promised to attend to everything for me. All we have to do is to let him know when we're coming. He's even got an American preacher at hand."

She laughed. "And when did you dare to do this?"

"Yesterday, as soon as I had your telegram. It wasn't daring, was it, to assume that you meant what your telegram implied?"

"Whatever it was or was not, I like it."

"I thought," he continued, "that we would better marry in some way that would leave her a chance to come around quietly afterward."

"Yes, that is better than going to Scotland," said Elsie reflectively.

Dayton laughed. "And who dared to think out an elopement away off to Scotland?" he said.

Elsie was still blushing when her mother came in. Dayton invited them to dinner and the theater, and Mrs. Grant accepted.

At 8 the next morning, as Dayton had finished shaving and was going into his bath, there was a knock at the outer door of his sitting room.

"What is it?" he called.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," came through the door.

"Carpenter," he said to himself. Then to the servant: "Show him up, please. Bring him to the sitting room and tell him I will see him directly."

With this he unlocked the outer door and went back through the bedroom into his bathroom. Soon he heard the outer door open and the servant showing his caller in. When he had bathed he returned to the bedroom. The portiere was drawn across the door into the sitting room. He could wait no longer. "I say, old man," he shouted, "did you get a good yarn?"

There was a sharp rustling, then silence. He went to the portiere and threw it back and stood in the doorway, his bathrobe half open, his face and neck red from the cold water, his hair tumbled. He was transfixed. Before him, gazing at him, sat an old man, a study in the black of bristled hair and the white of linen and skin and wool-like hair and side whiskers. His head was wagging and his mouth ajar as he stared stupidly at Dayton. He raised himself with the aid of a gold-headed cane and put up his eyes. "I must apologize to you," he quavered. "I'm so disturbed that I hardly know what I'm about this morning. I fancied I was in the rooms of a Mr. Fenimore Dayton."

"I'm Fenimore Dayton," said Dayton. And then a horrible thought flashed into his mind.

The old man's mouth had flown open again. "What?" he exclaimed. "Impossible!"

Dayton, all the blood in his body in his face, stood there unable to speak.

CHARGE OF ARSON.

Newport, Ky., May 16.—Chief John Watters, of the fire department, made affidavit to a warrant today charging former County Superintendent of Schools, U. S. Dunn, with arson. The department was summoned at 2:30 this morning to the residence owned by Charles Roehl, where the entire second floor was in flames. Dunn occupied the second floor and attic. Chief Watters upon investigation discovered thick carpet paper nailed against the windows in Dunn's apartments to shut from view the fire inside.

BODY FALLS TO PIECES.

Owensboro, Ky., May 16.—Joseph Ray, 35 years of age, who was burned by falling off the fire eight days ago, at his home, died today. When his body was removed from the bed upon which he had been suffering, it fell to pieces. A day after he was burned, pneumonia developed. During his illness large chunks of flesh dropped from all parts of his body and face.

SECOND WEDDING.

Louisville, Ky., May 16.—Married before she was 17, divorced last Tuesday, Mrs. Leutessia Logsdon, who will not be 19 for two months lacking one day, was married in Jeffersonville yesterday by Magistrate Charles S. Ferguson to Lester Smith, who is barely 21 years old. In securing her divorce Mrs. Smith was restored to her maiden name and she declined to say what the name of her former husband was, remarking that she had paid to take the name of her parents.

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Owensboro, Ky., May 16.—Z. T. Robinson today filed suit against the city of Owensboro to prevent the council from annexing his property to the city.

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Former Treasurer Sued.

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Home-Coming Week.

Russellville, Ky., May 16.—Russellville and Logan county people are arranging for a home-coming to follow the home-coming week at Louisville.

Miraculous Escape.

Harrodsburg, Ky., May 16.—After rolling down a cliff 212 feet high and bounding from ledge to ledge finally landing on the banks of the Kentucky river, Frank Ashcraft was found by his brothers, near here badly bruised but with no bones broken and a good chance to recover.

Ashcraft was walking along the edge of the road leading around the cliff, and near what is known as "Brooklyn bridge," when he stumbled and fell.

Bride and Groom Coming.

Carrollton, Ky., May 16.—Cards have just been received announcing the marriage of Consul W. W. Masterson and Mrs. Perkins Hughes on May 7 in Rome, Italy. Mr. Masterson is a son of Mrs. R. W. Masterson of this city and is on his way to the Louisville home-coming from his post in Aden, Arabia. The bride is a native of Pennsylvania, but has been traveling in Europe.

Hopkins County Host.

Hopkinsville, Ky., May 16.—Arrangements are gradually taking form and many places are being considered for the celebration of Home-Coming week in Hopkins county.

THE EYE OF GOD.

Searchlights Prove Effective Weapons in Subduing Zulus.

Dunbar, Natal, May 16.—Searchlights have proved to be just as effective weapons in subduing the sedition of the Zulus as the British guns, judging from the display given last night by Native Commissioner Sanders before a huge gathering of Zulus at the Nkhandahla headquarters of the punitive force. The natives were awestruck and regard the searchlight as the eye of the Almighty, and said that God had turned it upon them in his anger.

No Peace in Zion.

All overtures for a peaceful compromise of the controversy over the control of Zion City were called off yesterday and Voliva and his associates have decided to fight for supremacy in the courts.

KENTUCKY NEWSLETS

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Dangers of Defective Plumbing.

Defective plumbing permits the entrance into the house of sewer gas bearing germs of contagious diseases to which the human system readily succumbs. Sewer gas is not necessarily generated in the sewer, but is frequently created in the plumbing system within the home and enters the apartments through defective fixtures. If in doubt, consult us regarding the piping and replacing defective fixtures with "Standard" Porcelain Enameled Ware—acknowledged as the best sanitary equipment. **ED D. HANNAN,** 132 South 4th St. Both Phones 201

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FIRST TIME

Patterson Is Ahead in Number of Instructed Delegates.

Nashville, Tenn., May 16.—According to the American tabulation printed tomorrow, General Patterson now has 411 uncontested votes, although this includes the votes of Clay and Decatur, which are uninstructed, but assuredly for him. Gov. Cox has a total of 403. This is the first time during the contest, owing to the Cox habit of contesting the vote of every county their man could not carry, that Gen. Patterson has taken the lead. The vote now stands: Patterson 411, Cox 403, Bond 72, Washington 23, Carmack 4, uninstructed 44, contested 298.

Pay All Losses.

Chicago, May 16.—At a meeting of the directors of the Traders' Insurance company, which passed into the hands of a receiver a short time ago because of the losses of the fire at San Francisco, it was decided to pay the losses dollar for dollar.

Must Stand Trial.

Abraham Hummel, the New York lawyer, must stand trial on two indictments, charging subornation of perjury in the Dodge-Morse divorce case and next Monday has been set as the date for his trial.

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